Spectrographic Plates

Series of memos, beginning 11/4/40, on their destruction.

Clearly reference is to ordinary and closed cases.

No reference to any special or histroical cases or those not closed.

Ibitially after six months they'd be kept for three years prior to destruction, with periodic reviews Nove,ber 1 and May 1 of each year.

The 12/4/44 memo to Director from The Executive Conference, signed by Tolson and E.A. Tamm, says "It is usually desirable to save them for court testimony purposes and possible refefence in future examinattons" for at least the time then saved for. This seems to indicate there could be continuing need to hold, as for testimony.

1/8/45 Baughman to Coffey indicated that plates are kept for longer periods with some of FBI's "outstanding" cases and "active" ones.

These records also reflect the fact that when and as the plates were destroyed, what was destroyed was recorded.

62-38539 referred to as "Spectrographic Plate file" in Serial 162, 2/13/50, Parsons to Harbo.

This memomsays there is a set of plates on which the chemical elements are recorded, more of less standard plates, in addition to those made for examination. Reference plates.

1/12/55 Beach to Parsons says that the Spectrographic Unit holds plates for 6 months, after which they are "turned over the XXXXXXX Laboratory files where they are held for a period of five years..." It also says the plates "are reviewed when testimony is required" and "are normally taken to the trial." (Five years, statute limitations)

2/7/58 White to Parsons, #196, says "These plates are normallymreviewed immediately prior to a trial. . ." Means they are held as long as a case is active, which JFK still is.

(Use of glass plates contiumed long after JFK assassination. 1/5/70 holds reference to use of film, 10 inches long. But there are later references to glass plates.)

1/7/74 Williams to White says that plates "are filed alphabetically in the Instrument Analysis Unit. . .and are then placed in the Laboratory Files . . ." 1/9/75 says same. Copies provided to you because they deny there are any Laboratory Files. Caps in originals.

As late as the last record provided, 1/11/80 (#293) Cronin to Herndon, these records state that theplates are preserved as long as there may be need for testimony and that they are taken to that testomony.